United Nations S/2003/1158

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 December 2003

Original: English

Letter dated 2 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the situation in Georgia issued on 24 November 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marcello **Spatafora**
Permanent Representative of Italy
to the United Nations

03-64655 (E) 101203

Annex to the letter dated 2 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement on the situation in Georgia issued on 24 November 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union notes with satisfaction the peaceful outcome to the political crisis in Georgia over the past weekend. The European Union calls on all political actors to continue to show restraint, and to refrain from the use of force in the testing times ahead. Outstanding differences should be settled through dialogue and within the framework of the Constitution.

The European Union looks forward to working with new political leaders in Georgia to ensure that the will of the Georgian people may be freely expressed and translated into tangible political action. The European Union Special Representative, Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, is meeting with all main actors in Tbilisi to discuss the immediate way ahead for Georgia. The European Union renews its commitment to assisting Georgia in overcoming its difficulties.

The European Union attaches the highest importance to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. It is important to maintain the unity of the Georgian people in its search for a better future. Positive developments in Georgia may contribute to peace and stability in the whole of the South Caucasus.

The European Union pays tribute to the political courage of former President Shevardnadze, whose behaviour has avoided bloodshed and the division of the Georgian people. He has confirmed his statesmanship, and his long career will be remembered for his lasting service to international peace.

The European Union stands ready, together with others and taking account of the particular role of OSCE, to assist Georgia in the preparation and conduct of the announced elections. It is imperative that these be adequately prepared, free and fair, so as to reflect the will of the people of Georgia.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.